



School Nutrition Programs (SNP) Bulletin

**November 2, 2020 - School Nutrition Programs (SNP) Bulletin No. 11 - 31k
Grant Application Now Available**

Student Meal Negative Balance Forgiveness School Year 2020-2021 Grant Application Now Available

The 31k Grant Application is now live at [31k Grant Application](#).

For the 2020-2021 school year only, we have \$1 million in new state school aid fund money appropriated (Section 31k) for reimbursement payments to public school districts, charter schools, and public-school academies who forgive all outstanding current student-meal negative balances.

Reimbursement payments can be awarded to eligible districts that apply. The application is now live and has a firm deadline to apply no later than December 1, 2020.

Submissions will be evaluated and reimbursement payments for selected districts will be made within 60 days of the final deadline. The funds may be prorated if there is not enough to cover all eligible submissions.

To be eligible districts must:

- Write off outstanding current/active/enrolled student meal negative balances with a transfer from the General Fund
 - Student Meal Negative Balances paid off from private donations or angel funds are not eligible for Forgiveness Reimbursement
 - Bad debt written off for inactive students in prior school years is not eligible for Student Meal Negative Balance Forgiveness Reimbursement
- Adopt a meal charge policy that prevents public identification and all forms of lunch shaming as outlined in State Aid Section 31k (see below).

The application will require submission of the following:

1. The transactions used to write off current negative balances from the Food Service Fund with a transfer from the General Fund as of September 30, 2020.
2. Total amount of forgiven negative balances for current/active/enrolled students as of September 30, 2020, by eligibility status.
3. A copy of the student roster by eligibility of negative balances for current/active/enrolled students as of September 30, 2020.
4. Meal charge policy that prevents lunch shaming with the specifics outlined in State Aid Section 31k as follows:
 - prohibits the requiring of students who cannot pay for a school meal or who owe a negative balance to wear a wristband or handstamp
 - prohibits the requiring of students who cannot pay for a school meal or who owe a negative balance to perform chores or other work to pay for school meals
 - prohibits the requiring of students to dispose of a meal after it has been served because the student is unable to pay for the meal or has a negative balance
 - prohibits the direct communication with a student about a negative balance unless your district has unsuccessfully attempted to contact the student's parent or legal guardian first through telephone, mail, and electronic mail
 - prohibits discussing a negative balance with a student in the presence of other students

Questions regarding this grant application can be sent to the Fiscal and Administrative Services Monitoring Team at MDE-Fiscal@Michigan.gov or 517-241-5380.

Questions and Answers:

Question: How far back can we go for negative balance write offs? Just the 2019-2020 school year?

Answer: To be eligible the negative balances must be outstanding from current students, and it must be written off from the General Fund as of September 30, 2020. Negative balances from inactive students (bad debt) are not eligible.

Question: Can I just wipe/forgive the negative balances from the Food Service Fund without a transfer from the General Fund?

Answer: No. It is not allowable to absorb negative balances in the Food Service Fund. They must be paid for from a non-federal funding source like the General Fund (excluding donations or Angel Funds).

Question: Does the meal charge policy have to be Board approved?

Answer: No, this is not a requirement. However, it is a best practice.

Question: How will I be notified if my district is chosen to receive the Forgiveness funding?

Answer: You will receive a notification from GEMS/MARS once the awardees have been chosen.

Question: What if I am not selected for a grant payment? Can we reverse the write off entries in the Food Service Fund?

Answer: No, once the negative balances are written off the Food Service Fund they cannot be reversed. The district can choose to try to collect on those negative balances within the General Fund, however.

Contact Us

Email: MDE-SchoolNutrition@Michigan.gov

Nutrition Gateway: The Michigan Department of Education [Nutrition Gateway](#) provides Child Nutrition Program (CNP) agencies a singular system to access annual CNP applications (MEGSplus), monthly claims (MIND) and periodic administrative reviews (GEMS/MARS) through an integrated dashboard and portal.

If you or someone you know is interested in receiving the School Nutrition News and Updates and SNP Bulletins, visit [School Nutrition News and Updates Subscription](#).

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Links used in this document:

<https://mdoe.state.mi.us/GEMS/public/QuestionnaireHome.aspx?code=i7c9tdfn>
<https://mdoe.state.mi.us/gateway/Authentication/LoginClick>
https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIMDE/subscriber/new?topic_id=MIMDE_229
https://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Complain_combined_6_8_12.pdf